

Do video games impede adolescents cognitive development

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Do Video Games Impede Adolescents Cognitive Development? by Video games industry is more profitable than television or DVD, and the involvement of people of different ages grows. Video games have become a routine part of a day for almost all children, teenagers and great part of adults in America. They provide users with entertainment and various kinds of activities. It is necessary to remember that video games are the medium of communication and information transmission, and thus they have certain impact on auditory. Parents are mostly bothered by the questions if video games are addictive and what exact effects they have on children`s and teenager`s cognitive development. However, the exact effect depends on the type of video game and the quantity of time spent. Violent video games are proved to cause deviations in adolescents` behavior as a result of desensitization and stereotyping.

First of all it is necessary to keep in mind that there are different video games, with almost opposite types of tasks and graphic. Some are created as simple quests while others presuppose violence as a basis of a game. Games differ in a number of dimensions and activate various cognitive and behavioral systems in players (Gentile & Gentile, 2008). When negative effects of video games are discussed people usually mean violent video games because it is difficult to imagine how simple video games, such as Super Mario, can provoke aggression in people. But violent video games are proven to cause negative effects in children`s and teenagers` cognition. Exposure to video games violence has short-term and long-term effects. In laboratory conditions it was revealed that even brief consumption of violent video games (even 15 minutes) tunes player`s mind on aggression (Anderson,

Carnagey, Flanagan, Benjamin, Eubanks, & Valentine, 2004).

Long-term effects are more threatening. Since children and adolescents do not have stable world perception and are unable to see the difference between real violence and video violence, players show decrease in normal empathic response to real violence, which is called desensitization. Thus, loss of normal empathic reaction to violence, blood, death, and aggression is the major negative effect of video games. Adolescents who get too involved in video games and spent more than 5 hours playing violent games are prone to behaving more violently in real life. It happens because a brain of a teenager is still developing and it reacts more impulsively on violent and sexual imagery (Walsh, 2004).

Another negative effect on adolescence is stereotyping. It was revealed that video games usually portray women in a stereotypical way showing intended anti-women attitude. It results in distortion of normal perception of women and such negative phenomena as domestic violence or rape. Moreover, video games usually portray representatives of minorities in a perverted way (Dill, Brown, & Collins, 2007).

However, some games also have positive effect on children`s and teenager`s development since they improve reaction and speed up decision making. Moreover, some games help people with obesity as they include dancing and moving (Epstein et al., 2007).

It is possible to conclude that video games effect cannot be described as totally negative or positive. Depending on a type of a game and a time of playing games can have different impact on adolescents. However, exposure to violent video games has proven negative short-term and long-term

consequences such as aggression outbreaks, desensitization, and distorted perception of minorities and women.

References

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